

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 10 with the following:

In the area of the first sidepiece 12 and the end surface 10, a lubricant reservoir 17 is provided, from which lubricant can travel to the contact surface between the sealing lip 18 and the first sidepiece 12. An appropriate lubricating action is thus provided, which also helps to increase the life-span of the seal. An area 20 of the first sidepiece 12, which is in contact with the sealing lip 18, is at least one of hardened and subjected in certain areas to at least one of plasma nitriding and controlled oxidation.